

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus, comprising:
a product having control circuits; and
a verification and activation module coupled to the control circuits of the product,
wherein the verification and activation module activates the control circuits of the product.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the verification and activation module is removably coupled to the product.
3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the control circuits of the product are deactivated when the verification and activation module is not coupled to the product.
4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the verification and activation module is programmed with information.
5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the programmed information comprises purchase date and price of the product.
6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the programmed information comprises warranty information for the product.
7. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the programmed information comprises data about a consumer who purchased the product.

8. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the programmed information comprises data about a manufacturer of the product.

9. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the programmed information comprises data about the product.

10. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the verification and activation module comprises a non-volatile programmable memory.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the non-volatile memory is selected from the group consisting of electrically erasable and programmable read only memory (EEPROM), Flash memory and battery backed-up random access memory (RAM).

12. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the product comprises verification and activation circuits.

13. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the verification and activation module comprises a non-volatile programmable memory, and verification and activation circuits.

14. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a security feature that deactivates the product when outside of a geographical location.

15. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a security feature that deactivates the product when a security signal is not present.

16. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein warranty history of the product is stored in the non-volatile memory.

17. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein repair history of the product is stored in the non-volatile memory.

18. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein maintenance history of the product is stored in the non-volatile memory.

19. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a communications interface coupled to the verification and activation module.

20. The apparatus of claim 19, wherein the communications interface is selected from the group consisting of WIFI and Bluetooth.

21. A system for verifying and activating a product upon purchase by a consumer, said system comprising:

a product;

a verification and activation module;

a point of sale terminal; and

a module programmer for programming the verification and activation module, the module programmer is coupled to the point of sale terminal, wherein information from the point of sale terminal is programmed into the verification and activation module so that the product is activated when coupled to the verification and activation module.

22. The system of claim 21, further comprising a package, wherein the product is in the package.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the verification and activation module is in the package.

24. The system of claim 22, further comprising a universal product code (UPC) label on the package.

25. The system of claim 24, further comprising a UPC reader coupled to the point of sale terminal, wherein part of the information programmed into the verification and activation module is from the UPC label.

26. The system of claim 21, further comprising a credit card reader that is adapted to read a credit card, the credit card reader is coupled to the point of sale terminal, wherein some of the information programmed into the verification and activation module is from the credit card.

27. The system of claim 21, wherein the programmed information comprises purchase date and price of the product.

28. The system of claim 21, wherein the programmed information comprises warranty information for the product.

29. The system of claim 21, wherein the programmed information comprises data about a consumer who purchased the product.

30. The system of claim 21, wherein the programmed information comprises data about a manufacturer of the product.

31. The system of claim 21, wherein the verification and activation module includes an RFID device and the module programmer comprises an RFID programmer.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the RFID programmer further comprises an RFID reader for reading information stored in the RFID device.

33. A system for verifying and activating a product upon purchase by a consumer, said system comprising:

a package;

a product in the package;

a verification and activation module in the package;

a universal product code (UPC) label on the package;

a UPC reader;

a point of sale terminal coupled to the UPC reader; and

a module programmer for programming the verification and activation module, the module programmer is coupled to the point of sale terminal, wherein information from the UPC reader and the point of sale terminal are programmed into the verification and activation module.

34. The system of claim 33, wherein the information from the UPC reader and the point of sale terminal are programmed into the verification and activation module by wireless transmission.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the wireless transmission is by radio frequency signals.

36. The system of claim 34, wherein the wireless transmission is by infrared signals.

37. The system of claim 34, wherein the wireless transmission is by electromagnetic signals.

38. A system for replacing an original product with a replacement product, said system comprising:

an original product;

a verification and activation module coupled to the original product; and

a replacement product, wherein when the verification and activation module is removed from the original product and coupled to the replacement product, the replacement product is enabled for operation and the original product is disabled from operation.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein once the replacement product has been enabled for operation by the verification and activation module, the original product cannot be enabled again by the verification and activation module.

40. A system for replacing an original product with a replacement product, said system comprising:

an original product having a first verification and activation module; and

a replacement product having a second verification and activation module, wherein when the first verification and activation module is in communication with the second verification and activation module, the replacement product is enabled for operation and the original product is disabled from operation.

41. The system of 40, wherein the communication is wireless.

42. The system of 40, wherein the communication is by wire.

43. A method for activating a product, said method comprising the steps of:
reading product information from a universal product code (UPC) label;
entering consumer information;
programming the product information and the consumer information into an activation module; and
activating the product with the activation module.
44. The method of claim 43, further comprising the step of programming store information into the activation module.
45. The method of claim 43, further comprising the step of programming warranty information into the activation module.
46. The method of claim 43, further comprising the step of programming purchase date and price of the product into the activation module.
47. The method of claim 43, further comprising the step of programming data about a manufacturer of the product into the activation module.
48. A method for replacing an original product with a replacement product, said method comprising the steps of:
providing an original product having a verification and activation module;
providing a replacement product; and
removing the verification and activation module from the original product; and

installing the verification and activation module in the replacement product, wherein the replacement product is enabled for operation and the original product is disabled from operation.

49. A method for replacing an original product with a replacement product, said method comprising the steps of:

providing an original product having a first verification and activation module;

providing a replacement product having a second verification and activation module; and

communicating between the first and second verification and activation modules such that the replacement product is enabled for operation and the original product is disabled from operation.

50. A method for product security, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a product having a verification and activation module; and

communicating with the verification and activation module such that the product is enabled for operation when a correct security code is communicated to the verification and activation module.

51. A method for retaining product service information, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a product having a verification and activation module, wherein the verification and activation module has a non-volatile memory; and

writing into the non-volatile memory service information.

52. The method of claim 51, wherein the product service information is selected from the group consisting of warranty repair and replacement of the product.